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SECURITY CHECK 8 YEARS LATE

State Dept. to Clean House?

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WASHINGTON, March 6.—The State Dept. has set up a blue-ribbon group to "re-examine" the personnel files of 175 employees listed as potential security risks in an 8-year-old memorandum, according to Congressional sources.

The employees are those still on the payroll of some 800 named in a memo, dated June 27, 1956, and signed by Scott McLeod, the now-deceased State Dept. security chief in the Eisenhower Administration.

The panel, the sources emphasized, is not empowered to re-evaluate the security clearance given the employees but to review the material in the file, apparently to determine whether some derogatory information may have been missed in the earlier clearances.

The McLeod memorandum was turned up six weeks ago by investigators for the Senate Internal Security subcommittee. Late in January, the subcommittee held a closed session with a State Dept. official in an attempt to find out what action had been taken on the list.

Appointment of a special committee to review the list apparently is a result of that session.

In the memo, Mr. McLeod wrote:

"Of the 800 odd listed, there are approximately 250 on whom the questions are, in my opinion, serious in relation to the broad security responsibilities of the Department. Fifty per cent are incumbents in high-level assignments in the Department or in the field."

Three of the names were listed as suspected agents of a foreign power. The raw data contained allegations of Communist activities or associations against 648 and of homosexuality against 94. The others were associated with questions of false statements, immoral conduct, intoxication and mental defects.

The McLeod memo was submitted to his State Dept. superiors more than a year after the public furor over what was called "McCarthyism" had died down. Mr. McLeod, who served as U. S. Ambassador to Ireland after leaving the security post, died in 1961.